of these guidelines. These guidelines, which are obejctive and transparent in nature, provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection of dealers/distributors. The procedure includes selection of dealers/distributors by the selection committee of the OMC concerned on the basis of evaluation of the suitablity of the candidates *vis-a-vis* certain laid down parameters and weightages. Further, the guidelines provide for grievance redressal mechanism and any complaint/grievance related to the selection of dealers/ distributors is dealth with by the OMCs as per this mechanism. At present, no change in policy in the matter of allotment of retail outlets, is contemplated.

Risk involved in Indo-Iran Pipeline Project

2314. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has expressed his apprehension about the risk in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipe line; and

(b) if so, what are those risk involved and how the Government proposes to overcome them?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) (a) Relevant extracts from Prime Minister's reply in the Lok Sabha on 3rd August, 2005 in respect of this matter during the discussion on "Statement made by the Prime Minister regarding his recent official visit to the United States of America" may be seen at Statement-I (*See* below)

(b) Taking into account the various political and security-related issues pertaining to the pipeline, India's over-riding objective is to achieve a "safe and secure world class project", as stated in the Joint Press Statement issued in Islamabad on 7.6.2005 by the Petroleum Ministers of India and Pakistan, and in the agreed minutes of the meeting of India - Iran Joint Working Group on hydrocarbon sector cooperation held in

Tehran on 12.6.2005, the relevant extracts being at Statement II and III (*See* below) respectively. With this obejctive in mind, India and Pakistan have each decided to appoint their respective advisory consortia, consisting of financial, techincal and legal experts, to advise about the various technical and contractual arrangements that should be built into every aspect of the proejct - technical, financial, commercial and legal- to mitigate risks and ensure a "safe and secure would class project" on the basis of international best practice. The advisers are expected to submit their reports to the Governments concerned later this year, on the basis of which Government will take a considered view about the structure of the proejct as also the nature and extent of our participation in it. Since the proposed project would be conceived and developed on the basis of international best practice, its viability and security would be founded on consensual and legally enforceable agreements in line with established international precedents, between the various national and commercial parties concerned, all of which taken together would have the intended effect of mitigating risk.

Statement-I

Extracts from the discussion in Lok Sabha on 3rd August, 2005 regarding statement made by The Prime Minister on His recent official visit to the United States of America

The other think that was raised was the question of the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline Sir, on this point, I have been quite clear. On my onward journey when I was going to Washington, I was asked this question by out correspondents and I had explicitly stated that this is a matter for us, Pakistan and Iran period; the United States has no role in it. I can assure you that no where in my discussion this question cropped up nor did I give any promise to anyone in the United States that we will not work to make this project a reality. I did say when the *Washington Post* Editorial Board interviewed me, they asked me this question: "You are on the one hand wanting nuclear power, you are also asking for this gas pipeline, why did you need both these things?" And I said: "There is uncertainty about this gas pipeline. We are still in a preliminary state." But I did say: "We need that gas desperately." The House has my assurance that our Government is committed to

make the gas pipeline a reality. But it would be wrong on my part to convey the impression that we are there. There are problems; we will have to look at the feasibility: we will have to look at the financing of these things. We will make sincere efforts to resolve those issues. At the National Press Club, I did say that we have civilisational links with Iran, and I said: "We have the second largest Shia Muslim community in our country." And that we can claim to be a bridge in reconciling these various differences that have arisen between Iran and other country. I did not act as a representative of a supplicant State. I was not there to sell India. I stood by what our national policies are, as approved by this august House, and I believe, Sir, that, by and large, I have carried out the mandate that was given to me.

Statement-II

Relevant extracts from the joint press statement issued by the Petroleum Ministers of India and Pakistan in Islamabad on 7.6.2005

Iran - Pakistan - India Pipeline: The two Ministers reviewed the Iran - Pakistan - India gas pipeline proposal. They agreed that the project, which envisaged supply of gas to Pakistan and India through a transnational pipeline, would go a long way in meeting the energy security requirements of the two countries and, thus, should be seen as a significant project for the benefit of the peoples of these countries. The Indian and Pakistani delegations agreed to exchange information in regard to the financial structuring, technical, commercial, legal and related issues to realize a safe and secure would class project. To this end, it was agreed that the momentum pertaining to the project should be accelerated by constituting a Joint Working Group at the secretary-Level, which will meet regularly and report progress to the Ministers to facilitate definitive decisions by them, at the earliest.

Statement-III

Relevant extracts from the Minutes of the meeting of India-Iran Joint Working Group (JWG) on hydrocarbon Sector Cooperation held in Tehran on 12.6.05

Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project: Both sides noted with satisfaction that as a result of regular discussions on technical issues pertaining to the project, a Head of agreement between National Iranian

Gas Exporting Company (NIGEC) and the Indian companies concerned had been finalized. With a view to undertaking further studies and discussions in regard to relevant issues so that the project could take off by early next year, it was agreed to establish a special JWG on the Iran - Pakistan - India gas pipeline project. This special JWG would be divided into sub-groups to address technical, commercial, financial, contractual/legal and other related issues to realize a safe and secure would class project. The first meeting of the special JWG would be held in India between 23-25th June, 2006.

Development of tourism in Rajasthan

2315. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tourists both domestic and foreign tourists who visited Rajasthan, during the last three years, year-wise and category-wise;

(b) the status of Rajasthan in the country from tourism point of view;

(c) the steps being taken by the Central Government in view of its tourism potential;

(d) the amount provided to the State Government for tourism sector during the last three years;

(e) whether any proposal of State Government to boost its tourist inflow is pending consideration with Central Government;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) whether Government have formulated any scheme and programme to develop tourism in the State of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) As per the information received from the state Government, the number of domestic and foreign tourist visits to the State of Rajasthan during the last three years is as follows:

Year	Domestic tourist visits	Foreign tourist visits
2002	8300190	428437
2003	12545135	628560
2004	16033896	971772